Rt. 4, Frederick, Md. 21701
December 28, 1967

Dear Dave,

Like Thompson, you seem to have made a "study" of the Zapruder camera without the Zapruder camera, a duplicate, an instruction sheet, and with the Nix camera. This is only slightly better than the CBS "study", which had the camera and didn't report on it. As a result, your memorandum of December 12 is wrong in fact and in conclusions.

I think in assessing what I wrote in WHITEWASH II, you should have considered my basic conclusion for the entire series of books, articulated in the first, that the job expected of the Commission had not been done and must be, entirely in public and preferably by Congress. In this light, your memorandum perhaps reinforces my own conclusions.

At the time I wrote WHITEWASH II the Zapruder camera, amazingly enough, was not in government possession. I thereupon launched a campaign that I believe did ~~succeed to~~ get it there. Meanwhile, I had also begun efforts to obtain an ixdentical camera.

I learned the government did have the Zapruder camera when I was taking Mike Berlin of the New York Post through the Archives. He and I examined it together. He then noted no "fast motion" setting and said to me, "you have a problem". My reply was that the government still did. Like you, he failed to understand the unique control of the Bell & Howell camera, with which I am familiar because we have for years had an older and simpler one. But in any event, I did continue my researches on this camera and they reached a point beyond which I cannot not go. You have not in any way advanced it.

LIFE also obtained a duplicate of the Zapruder camera (the one in the Archives is without the instruction book). I had taken a series of pictures of a stop watch with another camera to illustrate what I had in mind and I had given these to LIFE. Dick Billings, when they got their camera (I had been negotiating for one for them but it was both overpriced and broken), told me also that the slow-motion, which means more frames per second on exposure, preset speed is 48 fps. However, unlike other cameras, on this camera the preset speed can be meaningless on this Bell & Howell because it can be altered, consciously or unconsciously, by the operator.

There is not a dial on this camera, but a slide control. If it is pushed only very slightly upward, it takes individual pictures, like a still camera. The setting is called "animation". At rest, what Thompson calls a fourth setting, it does nothing. Below this is the "normal" setting. To expose film the same lever or button is depressed slightly. If one wants to take "slow motion" pictures, this same control is depressed a hair more, in the same direction. It is possible, without intending to, to shift from normal speed to slow motion, then back again, with the slightest change in downward pressure on this single control. In my public appearances with this camera I have shown audiences how simple this is. They cannot detect motion of my finger when I do it. The difference can be detected by the ear if there is quiet, for the motor clicks away faster at slow motion.

This, the central point, is what you seemingly are unaware of and do not address. Despite your invalid conclusion (page 9) that "it is physically impossible for Zapruder's camera to run at that speed", meaning 24fps, it is quite possible. That camera can run at any speed from 18 fps to 48, depending on the percentage of the

interrogated Zapruder and suppressed the Barret report, which was appropriate to Zapruder's testimony. I think no comment on the rest of his Zapruder "examination" is required, for it is painfully obvious.

For your information, I emphasize the repetition of the egreggious error (page 8): "Zapruder's camera runs at only 18 frames per second, and at 48 frames per second..." These are the settings, but not the actuality, for it can run at any speed between the two also.

So, I am left to wonder about your motive, especially because of your association with Liebeler, who you have gone so far out of your way to absolve of the major and inexcusable guilt and because you have been so entirely unscholarly when I know this is so much less than your capability.

Of all the things to which you could address yourself, why do you pretend this assault upon My work when you cannot begin to address it simply because you do not know what you are talking about. Why do you go into such elaborate detail about the Nix camera, which is not relevant, without anything except wrong conjecture about the Zapruder camera? That alone is relevant. What do you reprint photocopies of the irrelevant Nix camera instructions when you do not present those that are relevant, about the Zapruder camera. Those are available. Had you asked them of me, I'd had been able to send you copies. You can also get them as I did. Or, as I also did, you could have gotten a duplicate of the camera.

In my published work, I content myself with what is in evidence. You did not. You try to substitute conjecture for fact, and on this basis spread an attack on me and misinformation that I now ask you to correct by sending copies of this to each of those to whom your sent your memorandum of 12/18.

I must also wonder about a pretended study that is as unscholarly as yours, lacking as it does the basic information about the camera it pretends to study, while at the same time pretending what is not true, that the exaggerated and irrelevant information that consumes most of the space is both relevant and accurate as applied to the Zapruder camera and the real situation, when it is not. I regret that this makes sense to me only if I believe what I'd prefer not to, that it is either inspired or a work of intended sycophancy. I'd prefer to have a reason to believe otherwise, something more substantive than a simple denial.

Can I do other than wonder at your sowing of discord? At your blind acceptance of the word of Thompson (or is it possible that you do not understand his doctrine and intent) as irrefutable fact when it is so obvious that he is so frequently and overwhelmingly wrong on so many things that cannot be accidental?

If others now ask, "Is Lifton fronting for Liebeler?", wherein is it unreasonable in the light of this new history. Why do you continue to believe so. If it is not the case, what drives you to produce and circulate such drivvel when you are capable of so much that is pertinent and accurate.

I suggest that you do some deep soul-searching.

And you would do yourself and all of us some good if you did not engage in such divisive activities and refrained from wasting so much time for all of us.

Sincerely,